

# **Draft - Comprehensive Plan 2003 Troy, New York**

## **Workshop Comments**

### **Goal 1: Diversified Municipal Revenue and Property Tax Stability**

#### **Distributing The Tax Burden**

- Alleviating the burden on residential property owners is a priority
- Maintaining and improving residential properties and sustaining a high quality of life in residential neighborhoods are necessary to increase the market value of Troy property

#### **Focus New Development**

- Troy is built-out with few opportunities for new development
- South Troy Waterfront represents single best site to attract new development to the city
- Hoosick Street corridor is the other major opportunity for expanded commercial development
- Vacant buildings and the relatively slow legal requirements for foreclosing tax delinquent property detract from development corridors

#### **Economic Diversification**

- The City should try to attract not only high tech manufacturing but any type of clean industry

#### **Revenue Sources**

- City should explore other areas where it could charge fees for services (e.g public safety, trash collection) as a way to get some contribution from the not-for-profit uses
- BID is a good idea but Troy may be too small to support one

## **Goal 2: Technology Entrepreneurship Center Anchoring a Diversified Economy**

### **Tourism**

- Put much more focus on tourism, a growing sector which is relatively recession proof.

### **Diversification**

- Focus on emerging strengths - art and engineering. Don't discount manufacturing and make increased investment in manufacturing facilities and infrastructure
- Target tech companies transitioning from incubators to being independent firms

### **Transportation**

- Ensure excellent transportation access for companies moving products and for workers moving to and from jobs in the City and region

### **Graduate Retention**

- Graduate retention is best chance to build the creative class and stimulate job growth
- Retained students are talented, energetic, support entertainment and cultural assets, invest in homes and civic institutions like schools, churches and community associations

### **Linkages to the Colleges**

- Make more physical connections between the City (downtown and neighborhoods) and the colleges – especially RPI
- Focus on gateway improvements which make a strong positive first impression that the City is safe, clean and friendly for students visiting and attending RPI.
- Immediately plan for, estimate, evaluate and accommodate spin-off development from RPI's investments in bio-med and new media

### **Marketing**

- Do a better job of marketing Troy's programs, resources, retail and entertainment destinations to students and regional residents. Students are the major untapped market

### **Development Framework**

- Provide a development framework that is simple, predictable fair and cost effective for developers. Offer "one stop shopping" with a streamlined and understandable flowchart, and updated inventory of property
- Implement buffering and design standards especially on designated development corridors
- Increase developable property through acquisition, assembly, and selective demolition
- Focus on enhanced public safety

### **Workforce**

- Focus on workforce issues necessary to get underemployed residents into the productive workforce through skills training, GED programs and other efforts focused on non high school or non college graduates

## **Goal 3: Thriving and Vibrant Downtown Anchored By Arts And Cultural Assets**

The downtown strategy should balance retail/residential/commercial uses and should serve people's basic need as well as appealing to Sage and RPI students

### **Marketing**

- Marketing is critical and many methods should be used simultaneously including web, signs, and outreach
- Need to make sure a Troy message – focused on safety and the range of fun things to do gets out in regional marketing efforts
- City needs improved signage so people can find our assets
- Take advantage of marina – need to market to recreational boaters

### **Capital**

- The City should work with banks, RPI and the state to encourage purchase of commercial property through expanded access to low interest loans

### **Infrastructure**

- Improved communication and coordination between stakeholders and the City
- Parking is an initial need
- Need to increase the perception and reality that Troy is safe and clean through increased police presence and lighting
- Historic Preservation is key and a design study and guidelines which encourage high quality reinvestment should be encouraged
- Improve downtown gateways and increase access to the waterfront maximized
- Provide Incentives to property owners to improve appearance including a façade matching grant and paint program
- Emphasize code enforcement and garbage removal – especially for events

### **Retention**

- Focus on business retention - helping businesses stay by providing help with asset management and a “rescue squad” that helps businesses which are starting to fail to turn around

### **Entertainment**

- Community needs a book store/coffee house, new entertainment venues which stimulate life after 5:00 pm, especially focused on arts & culture
- Use zoning to address adult uses in downtown and convert Cinema Arts to a Art House Cinema

### **Housing**

- There should be more housing in the downtown.
- It can be developed through creative use of upper floors of historic buildings by artists or others. Artist live-in work space is a critical need.

### **Arts**

- Expand arts venues – the upstairs ballroom and dance spaces in many downtown buildings are unknown and could be used for studio space
- There needs to be a conscious effort to grow the arts market in the City
- Look at other places that have used arts and culture along with historic properties to create revitalization energy like the “torpedo factory” Alexandria VA

### **Retail Recruitment**

- Retail recruitment is important. Merchants need to reach out to our niche markets, especially students.
- We also need to attract businesses other than retail which put workers on the street to shop at retail stores.

### **Organizational**

- There should be one strong, centralized oversight group for downtown efforts to understand issues: BID, main street, marketing, arts, downtown living. This entity – like the former Downtown Council should bring together stakeholders who can make action happen
- A BID would need to address arts and culture and would need to be large enough and command enough resources to do a good job
- City should work to increase citizen involvement in downtown development – how will community use it? Own it?

### **Hotel/Conference Facility**

- The City needs a world class hotel and conference center as an essential tourism amenity. It should be built on the river.

## **Goal 4: Housing and Neighborhoods of Choice**

### **Density**

- Promote urban development in “clusters” so we still have urban districts and open space not a uniform lower density throughout the City. Appropriate density will vary by neighborhood
- Don't degrade existing neighborhoods with inappropriate new development
- Create opportunities for density reduction through financing incentives
- There needs to be more market rate and high end rental properties to accommodate young couples and empty-nesters

### **Citizen Involvement**

- Critical to improved quality of life

### **Public Safety**

- Community policing techniques need to be utilized including perhaps deputized citizens to increase presence (real or perceived) - “COPS” Citizens On Patrol Services
- Gang activity is a real issue and there needs to be more education in schools and communities about how to handle it

### **Housing Programs and Incentives**

- Build programs AND build awareness of existing programs
- Restore paint program for residential properties
- Institutional collaboration and leveraging institutional investment is necessary

### **Derelict Properties**

- Coordination between code enforcement and tax collection
- Securing – boarding vacant buildings and maintaining vacant lots
- Resources needed for growing the code enforcement coverage
- Provide incentives for use/acquisition of vacant lots by adjacent owners

### **Neighborhood Characteristics**

- City should strive to create mixed use/mixed income neighborhoods using a new urbanist model for development

### **Section 8 Housing**

- There are pros and cons to the expansion of Section 8 Housing.
- Property owners need education and assistance to address lead hazards

### **Traffic Management**

- Use traffic devices and traffic calming to create “community streets” and defensible spaces which inhibit drug trafficking

### **Housing Priorities**

- Code Enforcement (6)
- Reduce absentee landlords (4)
- Neighborhood involvement and association support (4)
- School district improvements (2)
- Variety of housing styles need to be offered (need more single family home choices)(2)
- More assistance programs for middle income homeowners – creative, education (2)
- Good Comprehensive Plan (1)
- Address gang activity
- Community policing resources (1)
- Acknowledge and capitalize on strong sense of urban place (1)
- Marketing and promotion of assets (1)
- Traffic calming (1)
- Coordination of enforcement with resources for remediation (1)
- Homeowner occupancy (1)
- Fair and consistent public services (1)

## **Goal 5: 21<sup>st</sup> Century Municipal Infrastructure**

### **Invest in Infrastructure That Maintains Neighborhood Character**

- Design streets that access rather than pass through communities
- Make pedestrian – friendly improvements (connections for walkers)
- Get streets in top notch condition and sidewalks walkable

### **Public Transportation**

- Need shuttles, buses, a better system to move people from the City to State Capital by public transportation and more ability to move about the City by public transportation.

### **Water and Sewer**

- Upgrade to water and sewer systems

### **Waterfront Infrastructure**

- Need expanded boat storage availability to encourage use of the river and more boater friendly infrastructure (seawall condition, tie ups, pump out facilities, launches)

### **Rail**

- Passenger trail with new fetch systems

### **Wireless Internet**

- Create wireless access points on streets ensures easy access to all buildings for lap-top access to internet instantly

### **Gateways**

- Work with RPI to build a pedestrian overpass at Hoosick and 10<sup>th</sup> Street
- Improve pedestrian safety at Hoosick Street

### **Zoning**

- New Zoning should reflect neighborhood characteristics rather than “lot” thinking
- Use of alleyway for infrastructure upgrades

### **Alternative Energy**

- Use of NYSERDA funds to demonstrate new technology (energy) in Troy and consider partnering with Plug Power and other high tech companies to help
- Are wind turbines on Troy hills viable
- Tap into RPI's solar energy progress
- Overhead, enclosed walkways between major downtown buildings
- Low voltage welcoming radio at city entrances – marketing, public message boards

### **Miscellaneous**

- Police, ambulance, fire sirens are too loud or the facilities need to be distributed more effectively through the city
- How can the old train tunnel under Congress Street be used? Parking? Boat Storage?

## **Goal 6: Healthy Community, Recreation and Environment**

### **Waterfront**

- Invest in purchasing riverfront property for recreational purposes and creating additional access to riverfront for recreation
- Finish the park and boat launch at Ingalls Avenue

### **Gateways**

- Preserve and develop the gateway area at 126<sup>th</sup> street along the riverfront

### **Historical Interpretation**

- Add the year the City was established and historical information to Troy gateway signs

### **Land Banking**

- Partner with Rensselaer –Taconic Land Conservancy to purchase property on Route 2 between cemeteries

### **Revenues**

- Citizens want more recreational opportunities, but City needs creative solutions for funding
- Develop income producing recreation at Prospect Park and old Troy city dump

### **New Park and Recreation Amenities**

- Develop a skate park and a driving range
- Powers Park concert events
- Develop “pocket” parks

### **Partnerships**

- Promote volunteer management and maintenance of park system



## **Goal 7: Rich Urban and Historic Amenities**

### **Resource Inventory and Designation**

- List additional historic districts/buildings
- Place more emphasis on Lansingburgh's historic resources
- Design and implement a system to evaluate which buildings should be stabilized and rehabilitated and which can be demolished including some mechanism to evaluate integrity of historic buildings
- Develop a parts warehouse
- Plan for and provide resources for building stabilization

### **Funding**

- Provide funding for groups involved in historic preservation
- Explore and develop creative financing strategies (i.e. best practices in other localities)

### **Education Programs**

- Educational programs for realtors, finance company's (banks), owner, residents
- Explore CLG designation/ source of funding for survey's education
- Form closer links with RPI School of Arch bldg. Cons. Program/RCHS/etc.
- Provide historic preservation representative/training to planning commission

### **Organizational**

- Work with neighborhood groups and associations in a focus block approach

### **Ordinances**

- Create a billboard ordinance
- Ensure that other infrastructure (streetscaping, sidewalks, lighting) are compatible
- Consider overlay zones for gateways
- Create a Historic Preservation Commission equal to planning/zoning commission
- Implement design/architectural standards

### **Infrastructure**

- Period lighting/amenities
- Focus on improvements of public parks to attract investment